



Oxford Street, Accra: City Life and the Itineraries of Transnationalism

Ato Quayson

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In *Oxford Street, Accra*, Ato Quayson analyzes the dynamics of Ghana's capital city through a focus on Oxford Street, part of Accra's most vibrant and globalized commercial district. He traces the city's evolution from its settlement in the mid-seventeenth century to the present day. He combines his impressions of the sights, sounds, interactions, and distribution of space with broader dynamics, including the histories of colonial and postcolonial town planning and the marks of transnationalism evident in Accra's salsa scene, gym culture, and commercial billboards. Quayson finds that the various planning systems that have shaped the city—and had their stratifying effects intensified by the IMF-mandated structural adjustment programs of the late 1980s—prepared the way for the early-1990s transformation of a largely residential neighborhood into a kinetic shopping district. With an intense commercialism overlying, or coexisting with, stark economic inequalities, Oxford Street is a microcosm of historical and urban processes that have made Accra the variegated and contradictory metropolis that it is today.

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